

# What is Taekwondo?

Taekwondo as a sport has over 112 million practitioners in 208 countries. It originates from South Korea where the world governing body, the World Taekwondo (WT), is currently based.

The modern form of Taekwondo was not agreed until 1955, but the sport has its roots in various Korean forms of martial arts stretching back more than 2,000 years.



The name Taekwondo literally translates as the way of the foot and the fist – tae means to break of attack with the foot, kwon means to break with the fist and do translates as the art of way.

# Olympic Sport

## The Sport

Taekwondo first appeared in the Olympics as a demonstration sport at the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games.

It made its debut as an official Olympic Sport at the 2000 Sydney

Olympic Games since then it has also featured in Rio 2016 and will be one of the 26 sports in both the Tokyo 2020 and the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

Taekwondo is certainly not limited to those in superb physical condition. Anyone can take advantage of its benefits when learning proper techniques.



# The Martial Art

It there is a difference between taekwondo as a sport and taekwondo as an art it is that the art recognizes no rules for combat while the sport of taekwondo is highly regulated for the safety of it participants.

As an art, taekwondo focuses on a combination of combat techniques and self-defense as well as being a good form of exercise and entertainment.

In taekwondo a system of attacking and defensive movements incorporating punching, kicking and blocking techniques as well as differing stances is done in a set sequence and is referred to as Poomsae. These basic movements bring together all the martial art skills in a graceful yet powerful manner.

Poomsae forms a significant part of the promotion process in taekwondo and practitioners must be able to demonstrate a good understanding of the arrangements before that can progress to the next rank.



## Health Benefits

As well as the sporting and self-defence aspects to Taekwondo the exercise on gets from martial arts training improves balance, flexibility, stamina, strength and posture.

Unlike many other forms of physical activity, martial arts also have a mental element which not only improves the mind's focus but also helps provide confidence and self control.



Individuals of all ages take up Taekwondo from 4 to 80 and those who take it up experience the following :

- Improved muscle tone and appearance
- Increased strength and stamina
- Improved confidence
- Improved flexibility
- Improved agility and reflexes
- Improved concentration and self-esteem
- Improved leadership skills
- Reduced stress

However, it is important to point out that not all martial arts programs will produce the range of benefits discussed. It's no wonder why taekwondo has become one of the most popular activities for both adults and children and why there are 112 million practitioners of the sports worldwide.